



Television and movie actor Gary Sinise, and leader of the Lt. Dan Band, performs here for a packed house.

Photo by Christine Wilson

Lt. Dan Band rocks Hohenfels

HOHENFELS, Germany – The 12-member Lt. Dan Band, featuring actor Gary Sinise, kicked off its European tour here to the cheers of a full house.

The almost two-and-half-hour show was an eclectic variety of music that seemed to reach nearly everyone in the crowd.

Immediately after the first song, Sinise invited younger fans in the audience to join him near the stage. Throughout the performance, he and band members took excursions into the crowd, often selecting participants for special numbers.

Sinise, currently starring in the television crime drama “CSI-New York”, formed the band in 2004 with long-time friend and musician Kimo Williams.

They had played together with other friends “just for fun” for several years before becoming serious and exploring the possibility of working with Armed Forces Entertainment and the USO, which sponsored this tour.

“We have been playing together for quite a while,” Sinise said. “We average 10-15 shows a year, 50 in the past three years. “I’m not (touring with) the band for the money, but for fun and a way to help (the troops and their families).” “We work pretty consistently,” noted keyboardist Ben Lewis. “Gary finds the time.”

Besides the USO tour, Sinise also is traveling downrange to visit U.S. troops in Iraq, where, in 2004, he co-founded Organization Iraqi Children. To date, “we have distributed 300,000 school supply kits, many to our Soldiers who take them to the kids,” he said, adding that he hopes to visit areas where the program is making a difference.

As for Hohenfels fans of the Lt. Dan Band, it was a show worth catching.

Lori Starnes, who waited more than an hour to meet the actor and grab an autograph, said: “I think he really gets it. He believes in and supports the military.”

Trevor Jackman, standing in line behind Starnes, was impressed by the way the audience received the musicians’ performance. “Everyone was involved,” he said. “They communicated with the crowd. I loved that Sinise reinforced his support of the Soldiers with his comments during the show.”

Accepting of the praise, Sinise, however, remains humble on his efforts. “Success in TV and movies has allowed me to go out and support my country. I’m a pretty blessed guy.”

By Garry Barrows

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